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OCI No. 3209/63

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
5 November 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Insurgency in Laos and South Vietnam

1. Laos

a. Pathet Lao pressure appears to have been stepped up somewhat in the Nhommarath region and the Plaine des Jarres area where small-scale clashes have occurred. [redacted] Pathet Lao preparations for further activity north of the Plaine. No significant change in the general pattern of Communist harassment is evident, however.

b. Premier Souvanna's conversations in Moscow apparently resulted in no significant change in the noncommittal Soviet attitude toward the Lao problem. While Souvanna said that the Soviets again indicated their willingness to supply some equipment to neutralist military forces, it seems unlikely that Moscow is prepared to supply more than a symbolic amount of military assistance.

2. South Vietnam

a. The overthrow of the Diem government appears to be widely popular, but it is too early to discern what effect the formation of a provisional government will have in uniting the country. The greater latitude of the military in prosecuting the war against the Viet Cong will be a favorable factor.

b. Moscow, Peiping, and Hanoi have all accused the United States of masterminding the coup and have labeled the new leaders American puppets. Hanoi's appeal to the South Vietnamese forces and ordinary citizens to rise against the "American imperialists and their stooges" was ignored, and there has been no significant Viet Cong military reaction to the coup. Communist military activity preceding the coup was at a normal level.

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c. The Viet Cong continue to capture more and better weapons than they lose, particularly the highly prized automatic weapons and mortars.

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